

On New Year's Eve, 2016, a competition labeled as "the battle of the babies" developed in New York City. Precisely at midnight two babies were born, rivaling each other for the title of the first baby of the New Year. On Long Island, a boy named Maxim was born. Birth monitors confirm that at the exact same time, in the borough of Brooklyn, little Zayden was born. It was a tie. No one could stop them from making their New Year's entrance into the world. When it's time, it's time!

What about you? What new step is it time for in your life?

The Apostle Paul knew something about timing. At a time when he devoted himself to persecuting and tormenting followers of Jesus, the risen Savior appeared to him personally, led him out of destruction and bitterness, and filled him with the Holy Spirit through baptism. Paul became a new person with a new outlook. Right on time, Jesus brought His grace into Paul's life.

God knows all about timing; that's why I ask you, "What new step is it time for in your life?"

On Christmas, you celebrated God's good timing, whether you knew it or not. Paul's letter to the people in Galatia tells us what caused Christmas: "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption" (Galatians 4:4-5).

It was the right time for Jesus to be born. God couldn't hold back anymore as He sent His Son into the world to make the biggest purchase ever. The price was high: the gift too big to wrap: Jesus agreed to go through death and hell for you, so you wouldn't have to; and overturn the effects of death so you never have to live in fear. He would die; He would rise; he gives the results to you as pure gift. Jesus has become your way into God. Full access is yours by faith.

Now is the time. It is the right time to return to God, to ask for His help, to let Him carry the load, to trust the risen Savior, Jesus Christ. You don't have to solve all of life's problems or carry the load of responsibility for everything. You don't have to figure out every angle or know all the answers. If you're tired of your anger, your regrets, your failures, your struggles, let today be the day you receive God's grace in your life. Put all your weight on Jesus, the One who can handle the load.

A group of women that met for Bible study came across a verse in Malachi which says: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver." That verse puzzled the women and they wondered how this statement applied to the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out more about the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next study.

The woman called up a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him while at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest, beyond curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith work, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire, where the flames were the hottest, so as to burn away all of the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot for what seemed like entirely too much time; then she thought again about the verse, "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver."

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the entire time that the silver was being refined. The man said yes, that not only did he have to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eye on it the entire time it was in the fire; too short a time, still full of impurities; if the silver was left even a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman sat silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "But how do you know when the silver is fully refined?"

He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's kind of neat—it's when I see my image in it."

God wants all His grace to be delivered to your life. He wants you to be recreated in His image. You may not be too excited about the idea of being refined, but it is only to bring you to your best. And think of it this way: the silver cannot refine itself. You and I have a Master handling us, giving us exactly what we need to turn our back on sin and trust him more fully. There is no better time than now to give yourself over to this process.

Now is the time to receive God's verdict: In Christ, you are found Not Guilty.

Now is the time to let him name you His own child, and as His child you have full access to Him. You stand to inherit a life of blessing and love that never ends.

When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under Law, to redeem those under Law, that we might receive adoption.

It's time to embrace life as someone selected by God. All the legalities and fees necessary for this relationship to take hold were handled by Jesus. He has secured your forever home. With this God as your Father and Brother, what new step is it time for in your life?